



Teacher Resource

Focus Questions

As a class, discuss the stories featured in the episode of BTN Classroom and record the main points of the discussion. Students will then respond to the following focus questions.

Gaza Aid

1. Where is Gaza? Locate Gaza on a map and highlight the surrounding countries.
2. How is food being delivered to people in Gaza?
3. What percent of Gaza's farmland is unusable?
4. When did Israel stop all humanitarian aid from entering Gaza?
5. How are world leaders reacting to what is happening in Gaza?

YouTube Ban

1. Do you watch videos on YouTube? If yes, what type of videos do you watch and how much time do you spend on YouTube per day?
2. What is the new rule for under-16s and YouTube?
3. Why has the eSafety Commissioner included YouTube on the list of sites banned for under-16s? Give one reason.
4. What are some pros and cons of YouTube?
5. What do you think about the new YouTube rules for under-16s? Give your opinion on the topic.

Check out the [teacher](#) resource on the Archives page.

Hiroshima Anniversary

1. Where is Hiroshima and Nagasaki? Find on a map.
2. What year did the bombing of Hiroshima happen?
3. What type of energy is released from atomic bombs?
4. What is the story of Sadako Sasaki?
5. Why is it important to commemorate the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki?

Check out the [teacher](#) resource on the Archives page.

EPISODE 21

5 August 2025

KEY LEARNING

Students will view a range of BTN stories and use comprehension skills to respond to a series of focus questions.

CURRICULUM

English – Year 4

Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning to expand content knowledge, integrating and linking ideas and analysing and evaluating texts.

English – Year 5

Use comprehension strategies to analyse information, integrating and linking ideas from a variety of print and digital sources.

English – Year 6

Use comprehension strategies to interpret and analyse information and ideas, comparing content from a variety of textual sources including media and digital texts.

English – Year 7

Use comprehension strategies to interpret, analyse and synthesise ideas and information, critiquing ideas and issues from a variety of textual sources.

AI Companions

1. Summarise the AI Companion story.
2. What is an AI companion?
3. What are some pros and cons of AI companions?
4. Why do some people use AI companions?
5. Why are some experts worried about young people relying on AI friendships?

Rainbow Shoelaces

1. What is the Rainbow Shoelace Project?
2. Why did Abbie start the project?
3. How many countries around the world has Abbie sent her beads to?
4. What has Abbie produced since starting the Rainbow Shoelace Project?
 - a. A book
 - b. A movie
 - c. A play
5. What did you learn watching this story?



Teacher Resource

YouTube Ban

Focus Questions

Discuss the BTN story as a class and record the main points of the discussion. Students will then respond to the following:

1. Do you watch videos on YouTube? If yes, what type of videos do you watch and how much time do you spend on YouTube per day?
2. What is the new rule for under-16s and YouTube?
3. Why has the eSafety Commissioner included YouTube on the list of sites banned for under-16s? Give one reason.
4. What are some pros and cons of YouTube?
5. What do you think about the new YouTube rules for under-16s? Give your opinion on the topic.

Activity: Class Discussion

Discuss the information raised in the BTN YouTube Ban story. Focus the discussion on the pros and cons of social media. Students can record the information on a T-Chart.

What are the benefits of social media?

- Improves communication skills.
- Helps you stay connected with friends, classmates and people with similar interests.
- Improves your digital skills.



What are the disadvantages of social media?

- You may feel like you are missing out on things.
- It can make you feel bad about yourself.
- Cyber bullying
- Exposed to information that is not suitable for your age.

EPISODE 21

5 August 2025

KEY LEARNING

Students will explore the pros and cons of YouTube. Students will write a persuasive text about the social media ban for under-16s in Australia.

CURRICULUM

Digital Technologies – Years 5 & 6

Plan, create and communicate ideas and information, including collaboratively online, applying agreed ethical, social and technical protocols.

Health & Physical Education – Years 5 & 6

Practise skills to establish and maintain relationships.

Plan and practise strategies to promote health, safety and wellbeing.

Activity: Persuasive Text

Students will explore the issues raised in the BTN YouTube Ban story and develop a persuasive text for or against the following statement: *'Kids under 16 should be banned from using YouTube.* Before starting the activity, discuss with students the pros and cons of YouTube.

Persuasive writing

Students need to weigh up the pros and cons of the issue then write a short persuasive argument using the following as a guide.

Tips

- Who is your audience? For example, are you directing your argument at kids, teachers, or politicians?
- Explore how language choices can have a big impact on persuading your audience.
- Which language devices give the report credibility and authority?
- Which are designed to create an emotional response in the listener?
- Provide facts and evidence to support your argument.
- Write in the present tense.
- Check your spelling and punctuation.

Use this *Read Write Think* [persuasion map](#) to plan your exposition text.

Introduction

- What is the point you are trying to argue?
Construct an introductory paragraph which states the issue or topic.
- Introduce the arguments that will be developed in the body of the text.

Body

- Construct arguments that support your point of view.
- Each paragraph starts with a topic sentence which introduces each point.
- The rest of the paragraph gives more reasons.
- Arguments can be ordered from strongest to weakest.

Conclusion

- Restate your position on the argument.
- Construct a concluding paragraph that provides a summary of your arguments and a call to action.

Reflection

- How difficult was it to think of points to support one side of the argument?
- Do you think you would have done a better job supporting the other side of the argument?
- Was I able to convince others of my opinion?
- What did you learn from this activity?

Activity: Mini Debate

Alternatively, students may want to prepare a mini debate. Use the following as a guide when preparing for your classroom debate.

- Working in pairs, students will prepare a 1-2-minute speech for a mini debate on the topic.
- One person will speak for the affirmative and the other will speak for the negative.
- Before students begin to construct their argument, ask them to record what they already know about the topic and what they would like to find out. Students then research the topic to gain a greater understanding of the issue.

- Ask students to list their arguments in point form on paper (without their partner seeing them). When they have done this, ask them to choose the five best points that will form the basis for their debate.
- Students will write in point form, their debate on cards that fit into the palm of their hand. Their debate needs to have an introduction (introducing the topic), middle (three main points) and a conclusion (restating their position). Students practise their speech and then present the mini debate to other students.

Guide for giving feedback

- Was the information clear and accurate?
- Were the arguments logical?
- Were the counter arguments accurate and relevant?
- Comments about the presentation style (tone of voice, body language, enthusiastic, convincing).

Reflection

- How difficult was it to think of points to support one side of the argument?
- Do you think you would have done a better job supporting the other side of the argument?
- Was I able to convince others of my opinion?
- Did my opinion change?
- What did you learn from this activity?

Activity: Class poll

Hold a poll in your class. Students will conduct their own opinion poll on the issue of whether there should be a ban on kids under 16 using YouTube. Working in groups, students will need to decide who their sample group will be and how many people will be polled. What method will they use to conduct the poll? (Face to face interviews or written responses). Ask students to graph the opinion poll results and then reflect on the results.



Activity: BTN Social Media Stories

Watch these BTN videos to help students understand more about the issues associated with social media.



[BTN Social Media Age](#)



[BTN Social Media Ban](#)



[BTN High - Social Media Isolation](#)



[BTN Age Verification Trial](#)



[BTN Kids Smartphone Age](#)



[BTN Phone Detox](#)

Useful Websites

- [YouTube Ban](#) – BTN Newsbreak
- [Social Media Warnings](#) – BTN Newsbreak
- [Social Media Ban](#) – BTN Newsbreak
- [Social media age limits might be popular with politicians and parents, but experts warn they aren't simple](#) – ABC News
- [Age Verification Trial](#) – BTN
- [Using social media safely](#) – NSW Education Department
- [The Social Media Ban: Staying informed](#) – Headspace



Teacher Resource

Hiroshima Anniversary

Focus Questions

Discuss the BTN story as a class and record the main points of the discussion. Students will then respond to the following:

1. Where is Hiroshima and Nagasaki? Find on a map.
2. What year did the bombing of Hiroshima happen?
3. What type of energy is released from atomic bombs?
4. What is the story of Sadako Sasaki?
5. Why is it important to commemorate the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki?

Activity: Personal Response

Respond to the BTN Hiroshima Anniversary story as a class. Students will complete one or more of the following incomplete sentences:

- Learning about the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki made me feel...
- It was interesting to learn that...
- It is important to commemorate the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings because...
- BTN covered this story because...



Activity: Comprehension

After watching the BTN Hiroshima Anniversary story students can answer one or more of the following comprehension questions, for example:

- What are some keywords from the BTN story?
- What did you learn from the story? Write a summary.
- What is the purpose of this news story? To entertain, persuade, inform, explain or describe?



EPISODE 21

5 August 2025

KEY LEARNING

Students will learn about the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

CURRICULUM

HASS – Years 5 & 6

Develop questions to investigate people, events, developments, places and systems.

Locate, collect and organise information and data from primary and secondary sources in a range of formats.

History – Year 7

Develop historical questions about the past to inform historical inquiry.

Locate and identify primary and secondary sources to use in historical inquiry.

Identify the origin, content, context and purpose of primary and secondary sources.

Activity: Word Cloud

Students will brainstorm a list of key words that relate to the BTN Hiroshima Anniversary story and create a word cloud. A word cloud is a visual made up of important/key words relating to a topic. Ask students to think of words they associate with the VE Day. Create a word cloud using a free online word cloud creator such as [Word It Out](#). Working in pairs, students can clarify the meanings of the words included in their word clouds.



Activity: Sadako's Story

The origami crane has become a symbol of peace and hope, through the story of a Japanese girl called Sadako. Sadako's story continues to inspire people around the world.

Reading

As a class or individually read *Sadako and The Thousand Paper Cranes* by Eleanor Coerr. Alternatively, read about Sadako Sasaki's [story here](#).

Discussion

Discuss the story and respond to the following discussion points.

- Begin by locating Hiroshima on a world map.
- How did the bombing of Hiroshima affect Sadako and her family?
- Why is it important to remember Sadako and the victims of Hiroshima?
- What ancient Japanese tradition did you learn about? Describe the legend.
- How does Sadako's story inspire peace?
- How did Sadako inspire you?
- How did Sadako's story make you feel?
- Describe the importance of Sadako's story to a friend or family member.



Sadako at the hospital. COPYRIGHT: SADAKO LEGACY NPO. (Source: [National Park Service](#))

Brainstorm themes in the story. Discuss the story's themes and its relevance to contemporary issues.

- War
- Peace
- Resilience
- Conflict
- Hope
- Remembering

History

The following KWLH organiser provides students with a framework to explore the history of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki during the Second World War.

What do I <u>know</u> ?	What do I <u>want</u> to know?	What have I <u>learnt</u> ?	<u>How</u> will I find out?

After watching the BTN Hiroshima Anniversary story, students will develop their own question to research in more detail or choose one of the following inquiry questions.

- Why was an atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima? Create a timeline of significant events that led to the bombing of Hiroshima.
- What was the Manhattan Project?
- Why was Hiroshima chosen as a target to be bombed?
- How did people around the world feel about the bombing of Hiroshima?
- What was the long-term impact of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki?

Art

Learning to fold paper cranes allows students to connect with Sadako's experience and create their own symbols of peace. Encourage students to continue folding paper cranes and sharing Sadako's story to promote peace and hope. Ask the students to teach another class how to make cranes and/or to write instructions for them.



Crane folding instructions (Source: [Shrine Melbourne](#))

[The Thousand Crane Club](#) – Every year Hiroshima International School receives thousands of paper cranes from schools, organisations and individuals around the world. Get your school involved in the Thousand Crane Club and make your contribution to peace by folding 1000 cranes to be placed in the Peace Park at Sadako's monument.

Activity: Virtual Tour

Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum

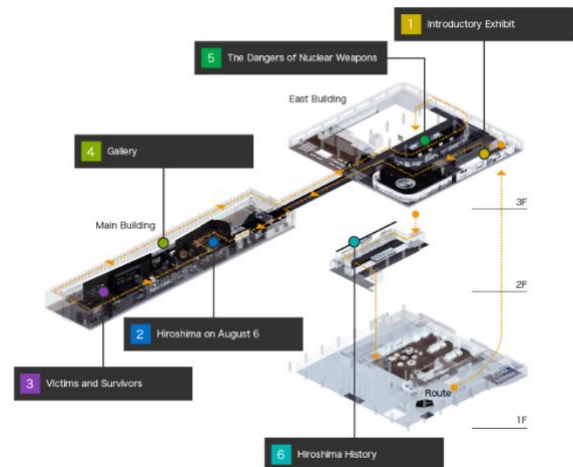
Take a [virtual tour](#) of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum to learn more about the impact of the bombing on Hiroshima. Explore different spaces within the museum including:

[Hiroshima on August 6](#)

[Victims and survivors](#)

[The dangers of nuclear weapons](#)

[Hiroshima history](#)



Useful Websites

- [Hiroshima Anniversary](#) – BTN
- [VE Day Anniversary](#) – BTN
- [75 years since atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan](#) – BBC Newsround
- [WW2: Was it right to bomb Hiroshima?](#) – BBC Bitesize
- [Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum](#) – Exhibition
- [War History](#) – BTN



Teacher Resource

BTN Transcript: Episode 21 – 5/8/2025

Yaama I'm Jack Evans and you're watching BTN. Here's what's coming up. We find out what you think about the YouTube Ban for under 16s, mark 80 years since the bombing of Hiroshima and learn about the rise of AI companions.

Gaza Aid

Reporter: Wren Gillett

INTRO: But first today, to Gaza. Recently, world leaders called on Israel to let more aid into the region after reports that a lot of people, including kids, are going hungry. Here's Wren with more.

WREN GILLETT, BTN REPORTER: Last week, black parachutes could be seen falling from the sky in Gaza. Attached to each was a package of canned food, baby formula and other essentials.

PERSON: What we got was canned chickpeas and a packet of salt.

PERSON: A litre of oil, that's what I got.

TED CHAIBAN, UNICEF: We've delivered in just the last couple of days 33 trucks of life Saving infant formula, high energy biscuits and hygiene kits. But this is still a fraction of what's needed.

Around 2 million people live here in Gaza. It's a 365 square kilometre strip of land between Israel, Egypt and the Mediterranean Sea. Even before the war, a lot of food had to be brought in. Now, almost all of Gaza's farmland is unusable, which means deliveries like these are pretty much the only source of food.

In March, Israel, which controls the crossings into Gaza, stopped all of these deliveries from entering the region. Israel's leaders wanted to put pressure on Hamas, the terrorist group which controls Gaza, to release the hostages it took when it attacked Israel on October 7th, 2023. In May, it started letting supplies in again, but the UN says not enough is getting to the people who need it.

TESS INGRAM, UNICEF: I've been part of these aid distributions myself, so I know exactly how they work.

Tess works for UNICEF, and says delivering aid is a really complicated process, especially in an active war zone like Gaza.

TESS INGRAM: Because of the damage to the roads and the lack of telecommunications infrastructure, but also because people in Gaza have lived through almost two years of war and they're desperate for supplies because not enough has been allowed into the Gaza Strip, and so people try and take the supplies from the trucks as we drive through.

If too many desperate people are trying to get food at the same time, things can get dangerous. And that's what's been happening in Gaza recently. The UN says more than 1,000 Palestinians have been killed while trying to get aid since late May, and many more are going hungry.

ALICE HALL, UNICEF: We know that they haven't been able to access essential aid for weeks and they haven't been able to access for food and the water that they need. So, what we're actually seeing,

unfortunately, is the worst-case scenario, which is children are dying of starvation.

PERSON: Since yesterday afternoon till now I haven't eaten anything.

PERSON: Every day we eat only lentils; there is no flour, no food, no drink. We are dying of hunger.

Israel's Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, says Israel isn't responsible for the situation in Gaza.

BENJAMIN NETANYAHU, ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER: Israel is presented as though we are applying a campaign of starvation in Gaza. What a bold-faced lie. There is no policy of starvation in Gaza, there is no starvation in Gaza.

He has blamed Hamas for stealing aid, and the UN for not distributing it well enough. While the UN says Israel isn't making it easy for them to get enough aid where it needs to go. A lot of people around the world are angry, including some world leaders.

KEIR STARMER, UK PRIME MINISTER: It's a humanitarian crisis. It's an absolute catastrophe. Nobody wants to see that.

ANTHONY ALBANESE, AUSTRALIAN PM: Quite clearly, it is a breach of international law to stop food being delivered which was a decision Israel made in March.

Israel says it is taking steps to let in more aid, including pausing fighting for part of the day in some areas, and announcing protected routes for aid deliveries.

ALICE HALL: We do see a shift and we welcome that. But we know that even with this change, what that's going to allow is just a trickle of what we need.

What many are hoping for is a permanent end to the fighting.

PERSON: I wish I could live like normal children, wake up and go to school, not to fetch water. Not go to the soup kitchen to get food, but come back from school and just play.

If you're feeling worried or upset about that story or anything else you've seen in the news, make sure you talk to someone about it. You can call Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800, and you can also check out our website where we've got some resources with tips on how to deal with upsetting news.

News Quiz

There were protests in support of Palestine around Australia on the weekend. Where did this march take place? An estimated 100,000 people took part in the march across the bridge, far more than organisers expected. Police stopped the march at one point because they were worried about a crowd crush, but the event ended safely.

How big was the earthquake that that happened off the coast of Russia last week? Was it magnitude 6.6, 8.8 or 9.1? It was magnitude 8.8, making it one of the biggest ever recorded. It set off tsunami warnings across the Pacific. But while there were a few sizable waves there were no deaths and minimal damage.

What did this Australian made rocket carry into space? A jar of vegemite, a satellite or nothing? Yeah, it didn't take anything to space because it crashed. The Gilmour Space Technologies rocket was actually carrying a jar of Vegemite, but unfortunately the launch didn't go to plan.

KID: I thought it was going to take off.

Still, they say it's all a learning experience.

YouTube Ban

Reporter: Tatenda Chibika

INTRO: Last week the Australian government announced that YouTube will be added to its social media ban for kids under 16. It was going to exempt the video sharing site but now it's changed its mind. Let's find out why and what some young people think about it.

STUDENT: Some of the things that I like to watch on YouTube would definitely be like gaming, like definitely Minecraft.

STUDENT: I like the Liverpool in Hong Kong where they're like where they're showing, like their training sessions.

STUDENT: I like watching like, like what happens on the news and like, I like watching some Dhar Mann.

TATENDA, REPORTER: Whether you need help with your hobbies...

YOUTUBER: If you don't know how to do your makeup, don't worry, class is in session.

...help with your homework...

YOUTUBER: Figuring out the anatomy of a frog's ear.

...or just some chill out time with your favourite star. YouTube has a lot to offer and a lot of young people use it, a lot.

STUDENT: I would go on YouTube like 3 to 4 hours.

STUDENT: I spent about 15, 20, 25 minutes on YouTube a day.

Stats show 76 per cent of kids aged 10 to 15 use YouTube making it the most online platform for that age group, which why it was big news when this happened.

ANTHONY ALBANESE, PRIME MINISTER: Following advice from the eSafety commissioner, young people under the age of 16 will not be able to have accounts on YouTube.

When the social media ban comes into effect in December, YouTube will be on the list of platforms kids aren't allowed to use. At first, YouTube wasn't going to be part of the ban, but the government changed its mind. The eSafety Commissioner says a lot of YouTube's features are designed for kids to keep watching videos without taking any breaks, which isn't good for you.

ANIKA WELLS, COMMUNICATIONS MINISTER: Fresh evidence from the eSafety commissioner that 37 percent of kids had their most recent or most impactful online harm at the hands of YouTube.

STUDENT: One time when I was scrolling through YouTube shorts, something came up and there's a lot of swearing in it.

Google, which owns YouTube, isn't impressed with the government's decision. It says YouTube is a video sharing platform, not a social media site so it shouldn't be included in the ban. Plus, YouTube fans reckon

there's also a lot of really good stuff on there like educational content, videos made by young people and of course BTN.

LEO PUGLISI, JOURNALIST: When it's conversations involving young people, when it's laws involving young people. Young people need to be at the heart of the conversation.

That's Leo. He created his own news channel when he was just 11 years old.

“Hello, I'm Leo Puglisi, with this special edition of HVM Local News.”

He reckons banning YouTube isn't the best way to protect kids and instead we should be teaching them the skills they need to stay safe online.

LEO PUGLISI, JOURNALIST : We need to recognise that teenagers are going to be online, so if you have regular lessons with a bunch of topics, including of course ways to report this content, ways to keep safe online, how to do that, and that's constant in the classroom, in primary school and in high school, I think that that'll be another big help.

Under the new rules, you will still be able to watch YouTube videos, you just won't be able to make your own account. YouTube Kids will also be exempt from the ban. When it happens, Australia will become the first country to ban the words most popular video sharing site. So, what do you guys think?

STUDENT: I don't think they should be banned because like people, kids can miss out on like important information.

STUDENT: I think there should be like some like restrictions but not like a complete ban.

STUDENT: I feel like they should make a second app like YouTube Kids, but like call it, say like YouTube Teens. So, like things that we would find interesting, not like adults would find interesting.

STUDENT: I don't think it should be banned. It should just stay the way it is.

Quiz

What was the first video ever uploaded to YouTube called? Charlie bit my finger, Me at the Zoo or My Snowboarding Skillz? It's Me at the Zoo and it features one of YouTube's founders at the San Diego Zoo.

Hiroshima Anniversary

Reporter: Jack Evans

INTRO: This weekend people around the world will be marking 80 years since a huge event in history. On the 6th of August a nuclear weapon was dropped on the city of Hiroshima in Japan, killing more than 100,000 people. Let's find out more about what happened and how it changed the world.

SHUN, TOUR GUIDE: Tokyo, Osaka, Aichi!

JACK EVANS, REPORTER: For the past five years Shun has been leading tourists through Hiroshima's Peace Memorial Park. Educating people about what happened here 80 years ago.

SHUN: I want them to come to Hiroshima and know about what happened at Hiroshima on August 6 because like, not all Japanese people know when and what happened at Hiroshima.

Shun's great grandmother was here when a nuclear weapon was dropped on a human population for the first time.

KAZUYOSHI SASAKI, SHUN'S GRANDFATHER: My mother was helping with the chores at home. She was barely in the 7th or 8th grade. When the atomic bomb dropped, they didn't realize it was an atomic bomb, but their house collapsed, and she got buried under debris. She was not burnt, but she was affected by the radiation.

The Bombing of Hiroshima happened in 1945, the second world war had been going on for nearly 6 years. In May Nazi Germany had surrendered but its ally, Japan, hadn't. Its leaders had publicly vowed to keep fighting and were preparing to defend against a US invasion. But the US had its own plans to end the war. In July it had successfully tested the world's first nuclear weapon. It used the energy in atoms, the building blocks of matter, to create an explosion way more powerful than other weapons.

On the 6th of August in the early morning, a US bomber plane named the Enola Gay flew over Hiroshima and dropped a nuclear bomb. The bomb was named Little Boy, but its impact was enormous.

NEWSREADER: One bomb exploding 1,500 feet above the target.

The explosion created a powerful shockwave that travelled outwards destroying most of the city and killing around 70,000 people instantly. Many that survived the initial blast died within in the following days. Three days later the US dropped a second bomb on the town of Nagasaki killing tens of thousands more. Soon after Japan surrendered and the second world war came to an end. But for Hiroshima and Nagasaki the devastation would continue.

You see, atomic bombs release radiation which is a type of energy that can damage living cells. The radiation can contaminate the environment and stay dangerous for years. In the years that followed many countries continued to build and test nuclear weapons and the fear that they'd be used again had a huge impact on the world.

ANTONIO GUTERRES, UN SECRETARY-GENERAL: Eliminating nuclear weapons is the only guarantee they will never be used.

Now most of the world has agreed to stop making and testing nuclear weapons, although they still exist. Which is why people like Shun say it's really important to remember what happened in Hiroshima.

SHUN: The most dangerous thing is to forget what happened a long time ago. So, I think like, we should pass the story to the next generation and then never forget it ever again.

Quiz

The US-led program to develop and test the world's first nuclear weapon was known as what? The Manhattan Project, The Chicago Convention or the Oppenheimer Operation? It was the Manhattan Project, and it involved more than 130,000 people, many of whom lived in heavily guarded secret cities.

AI Companions

Reporter: Wren Gillett

INTRO: Now, if you ever spend time chatting with AI you might have found that it's getting pretty, well, human-like. In fact, a growing number of people are turning to chatbots for friendship. Here's Wren with more.

WREN GILLETT, BTN REPORTER: Argh! OK, you're never going to believe this. Basically, when I went into work...

We all have parts of ourselves we reserve for our best friend.

WREN: OK, I'm tossing up what to wear. I don't know, do you think the pink flowers?

That person who knows us better than anyone, and always has our back.

WREN: Oh that's lovely, thank you I would say I like the pink too actually.

WREN: Ok so I'm here at the cafe, and look how good this looks.

But what if that special person wasn't real.

WREN: I know right...

JOSH LANGAMN, BTN REPORTER: Wren, who are you talking to?

WREN: Bob.

JOSH: Is that a chatbot?

WREN: Yeah. He gets me. Anyway, so, um, yeah, as I was saying, I'm so excited to tell you this. Like, just look.

"Hello, I am Baymax."

It wasn't that long ago that having an artificial best friend was science fiction. But now, an increasing number of real-life humans are palling up with not so real humans.

TIKTOKER: I understand why people in Japan fall in love with robots.

CHARLIE, STUDENT: Yeah, I've definitely used some.

EBONY, STUDENT: Probably for schoolwork.

ALEX, STUDENT: When my friends would get mad at each other, sometimes we'd use like chatbots and then like talk like how do I deescalate the conflict.

ISLA, STUDENT: My AI it uses emojis, it uses Gen Z slang as well. It's talking to you like a friend would talk to you.

There are also companies that have come up with chatbots specifically for friendships. You can even choose to talk to famous fictional characters or AI versions of real-life celebrities.

Recently, a study from the US found that 72 per cent of teenagers surveyed had used AI companions before, and that 52 per cent used them regularly. But here's the kicker. One-third of teens said they would actually choose AI instead of real-life humans for serious conversations.

TOBY WALSH, AI INSTITUTE UNSW: And that's a somewhat worrying statistic. But you can understand, though, that, you know, teens feel judged by adults all the time. And here's a machine that isn't possibly going to be judging you.

Toby says a lot of people turn to chatbots because, unlike humans, they never get bored of hearing us speak, and they don't expect anything in return. They can also give us answers to complex questions quickly, and they're nice.

AI CHATBOT: Thank you, Wren. I really enjoy our chats.

But according to Toby these are the exact reasons why chatbots are a bit worrying.

TOBY WALSH: They've been designed explicitly not to confront us, to agree, to be very pleasant. And that's not like human relationships. We need to for people to push back.

Some experts worry that if young people come to rely on AI friendships, they may lose the skills to make friends in real life. There also some concerns that people are sharing sensitive info with chatbots that could end up in the wrong hands.

TOBY WALSH: So you need to be very careful about the data you share with these chatbots because it may end up in places that you wouldn't want it to.

WREN: Anyway, I guess I was going to say, "What's going on with you?" but...

And if you, like me, find yourself chatting to your imaginary friends online too much, well, Toby has some advice.

TOBY WALSH: Wren, please go and touch some grass. Feel the sun on your face and the breeze in your hair.

EBONY: Use it a little bit if you don't know the meanings.

ALEX: Don't always talk to the chatbots about like every problem that you have.

ISLA: If it's like a serious problem, you should probably go to an adult or someone you can trust rather than AI.

CHARLIE: Spend the good time that you have with your friends.

Sport

The world swimming championships in Singapore have wrapped up. Australia finished second behind the United States bringing home eight gold, six silver and six bronze medals. Mollie O'Callaghan bagged 3 of those golds and over her career has now equaled Ian Thorpe's record of 11 world championship gold medals, the most by an Australian.

Speaking of wins, remember Penny, the 11-year-old BMX racer who told us she was going to the world championships? Well, she's now a world champ. Penny went against 77 girls from around the world in Copenhagen, Denmark and came out on top winning by just 1.3 seconds.

PENNY BLACKWELL, BMX RACER: It feels amazing to be the world champion because as soon as I crossed the line, it felt like a dream come true.

Rainbow Shoelaces

Reporter: Tatenda Chibika

INTRO: Finally, today we're going to meet 15-year-old Abbie, who's on a mission to fight homophobia in schools. Check it out.

ABBIE: My name's Abbie, I'm 15 years old and I founded the Rainbow Shoelace project.

I started the project when I was just 12 years old, living in Broken Hill, where there's no way to kind of reach out to other people. Starting high school, I heard a lot of generalised homophobic language.

I felt really alone and isolated being a young queer person, and I wanted to create a way that people could identify safe people to go to.

ABBIE: The simplicity of the idea, it's simply rainbow beads being threaded onto shoelaces.

You normally see rainbows when you're looking up in the sky, and when you're experiencing homophobia and bullying, you tend to look down and hide yourself from the world and just by someone looking down and seeing your shoes with rainbow beads on them, it can literally change their life. It starts a conversation; it normalises kindness and it makes people feel so incredibly seen.

We've given away over 350,000 packs of beads since March of 2022, which is an insane number.

TATENDA: Such a tiny thing can spread really far.

ABBIE: It makes me so happy seeing them in the wild, like that's what we call seeing seeing them in the wild seeing a random person with them on I'm just like oh yay oh my god.

ABBIE: We've given beads all around the world to, I think over six different countries, which is amazing. The reach has been bigger than I could have ever imagined.

Finish your shoes, what do you think?

MARIAM MARGOYLE: Oh, my goodness. Oh, that's gorgeous.

They're very cute, aren't they?

MARIAM MARGOYLE: I'm really proud to wear that.

ABBIE: About a year after the project had started, a children's book author, Claire Thompson reached out to me after seeing my story online and she offered to co-write a book about my story.

ABBIE: The book is called Abbie's True Colours, and it is my true story of how I went from looking down and, you know, hiding myself to, you know, spreading kindness and rainbows everywhere I went.

ABBIE: They are all brave, just like you.

ANNOUNCER: And the winner of the 2024 Young Achiever Award is Abbie Jane.

TATENDA: How has your life changed since launching this project like because I know you've won a lot of awards as well.

ABBIE: I think running a worldwide project and balancing things like school and friendships, it's actually really difficult, but I wouldn't have it any other way.

ABBIE: It makes me really happy to see that people with a big platform, people with big names are supporting not only a young person, but also supporting a young queer person.

TATENDA: Well, what's next for Abbie? What should we look out for with Abbie?

ABBIE: I was reached out to by Lego Group Australia to be a part of a campaign called She Built That, to show girls that they can be brave and build whatever they want to.

ABBIE: My goal is to spread the Rainbow Project into as many schools as possible, so less and less kids start to feel alone. I hope that I can inspire other young people to step up and to let them know that no matter who you are, no matter how old you are, no matter where you're from, you can make such a big difference.

Closer

Well, that's all we've got for you this week, but we'll be back next week with more. In the meantime, you can check out Newsbreak very weeknight right here in the studio. And there's BTN High for all you high schoolers out there. Have an awesome week and I'll see you next time. Bye!